

**Appropriations Committee  
Thursday, February 17, 2022**

**House Bill 5037: AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING  
JUNE 30, 2023**

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Queen Freeloove and I am the owner and operator of Tiny Tots Child Care in New Haven. I am also the President of the Child Care Council of CSEA SEIU Local 2001.

As a Provider I've been able to see first hand how providers and parents keep on being forgotten. The last ten years have been riddled with a very bumpy road for Child Care Providers. A closure of the Care 4 Kids system, payment failures and just as we finish one crisis, COVID starts. We've been fortunate to have a Commissioner at the Office of Early Childhood, Beth Bye, who worked in Early Education and truly listens to us, but her hands are tied by budget decisions. I am here asking you to let go of that knot and allow OEC to function with a real budget. Enough money to stop having to put out fires and do something transformational.

I have never been more doubtful about a provider's financial future than I am now. Usually, when people thank you for your service in a crisis, you don't expect they want you to be worse off. Right now there is not enough money to change the life of a in-home childcare provider. You might listen with a heavy heart of despair, but now it's time for you to hear that proper funding can bring forth real change. You just have to be committed to the life of young children and make a positive financial change in a provider's life. That way we can continue to contribute to the growth and education of young children. The Governor's budget fails to meet the needs of parents, children, and providers.

Increasing the supply of masks, cleaning supplies, and funds for the different state programs that allow parents to bring their kids to our care are all critical to the wellbeing of Connecticut's children and families. This is especially true for our infants and toddlers, for whom a safe, nurturing environment is particularly important during their early years of rapid growth and development.

I want you to remember that in 2015, when Care 4 Kids paused its program, the state had more infants die in a program in unregulated care than any previous year. To avoid infant deaths, to make sure kids are supported, the provider has to be open. And that means we need your help!

Thank you for hearing my testimony

Queen Freelove

President, Childcare Provider Council, CSEA SEIU Local 2001